(21) April 11 ? 1908

Saturday.

CLEEVE HOUSE,
MELKSHAM,
WILTS.

My Billy

I must write tonight in order to get this sent off Tomorrow morning early. Are you enjoying life without me? I hope you feel the difference. Or are you too much engrossed in me as a subject for your art to be able to think of me in the flesh? I am reading your life of Violet again & really find it very witty & brilliant. What should I have said? & but I wonder more & more how

you guys dared to show
it to her. It brings me
back to the atmosphere
of rarefied culture &
free talk which is so
congenial to me & is a
solace from talk of Julian
& the winter of '81.
You can imagine that
I play the part of the
proud mother even less
well than I did that
of the engaged young
lady. But on the whole
the baby provides a very
useful topic of conversation
on which we can all

discourse for some time without
fear of running into Art
or Religion. I look at these
surroundings & feel thankful
that he is still too young
to know the difference between
ugliness & beauty & in fact
rather enjoys the many
shining brass knobs which
meet the eye everywhere.
But it will be awful
when we have to educate
his taste & print out how
hopelessly wrong everything
here is. Poor little wretch
he's been howling all day
& so perhaps he knows
more than we think for.
I'm going to begin his
new bottle now & shall soon
increase it to two I think
for really my milk runs

signs of being too little.
Did you have Pernel to lunch & get anything interesting out of her? I look forward to a letter from you tomorrow, full of scenes. I have had a piece of time Stephen writ today in the shape of a letter addressed to Julian Bell Esq. NYPL Inside is a sheet of paper "with J. A. S.'s compliments" & a very small visiting card printed with "Mr. James Alexander Stephen". Isn't it what you'd expect?
I haven't had a letting to speak of since I've been here & no doubt you've been revelling in your scenes (?).
Yr V.B.

I.T. PARSONS 3.2.23

(22) 13 April ?

(1908 March)

CLEEVE HOUSE,
MELKSHAM,
WILTS.

Monday.

My Billy.

I have had two charming letters from you. Violet does sound very crazy. Is she in a highly emotional state & convinced that she is going to die & is she at all hurt with me for not having seen her again before she went? You seem to have had an odd conversation with Saxon. Walter & George, who I thought was at

Lyme Regis.

My son behaved like a demon all yesterday but has now recovered his temper. We spent our Sunday as usual here except that I had his company in the morning while the nurse was at church. Sunday dinner, of course & a general Sunday atmosphere - which depressed Clive remarkably. Lorna is away for the week-end - Dorothy is better & has a new nurse now.

Those are all the bits of news I can send from this place. All the old ladies in the village want to come & see the baby. & so Clive has had to arrange a plan by which I'm supposed to retire to my room in the afternoon to rest - or write to you. & so escape them. & we go out after tea. I look forward to Corn. wall & your letters meanwhile.

You must have had an interesting conversation with Pernel. Do you think she expects to have you

for a inter.-in-law? It would be very odd to be dropped into the middle of the Strachey family. Tell me if you have a proposal this week. Oh dear, why aren't we going to St. Ives when you do instead of wasting our time here? I really set to work to write to such a gifted beast as Billy with all his wits & graces & who has probably been spending his morning cascading about in his pyjamas. It's most likely criminal to bring the Second atmosphere near it. Yours letters are more one might sport.

Yours V.B.

(23) 14 April ?

1908

CLEEVE HOUSE,
MELKSHAM,
WILTS.

Tuesday.

My Billy.

My husband wrote to you today & so I did not write by the afternoon post but shall send this tomorrow morning.

I don't know what my "maternal fusses" are but if it means Julian's shooting you will be glad to hear that they're better. In fact he's very good now & his eyes are

getting very blue & attractive
– rather like mine, but
perhaps a better colour –
& he laughs at me
whenever I smile at him
There's a charming picture
for you in Think St. He
asked me how that ugly
old Aunt Virginia of his
was getting on today &
whether he'd have to take
much notice of her in
Cornwall – so I told him
not to bother as he generally
wasn't up to tea, although

She had pale green eyes. I don't think any amount of editing will make these letters fit for Adrian to read

Oh God. I think of you going to Storey's once more. How it brings back that extraordinary past of ours. when you always bought furniture stuff for your dresses & we thought it such a brilliant idea.

Did you see my old friend Euphie when you went to see Cave? I have forgotten how her hair grew & I would draw her for you now.

We had a visit from the Raven Hills yesterday & Clive & I dine with them

on Friday which will elsewise
that evening. We are also
going to a dance! as you
may have heard for I
wrote to Maud to get new
clothes. Things which would
seem too deadly in London
become the wildest excite-
ment here & I thought I
should enjoy showing off my
best clothes - so we are
going. I suppose a visit
to Bath will be our only
other dissipation.

What are Adrian's plans?
What the devil does
Violet mean by her card?
I really think she's off
her head. But even so
it's very odd the way her
mind works. Yrs V.W.

(24)
(17 April)

(Good Friday 1908)

CLEEVE HOUSE,
MELKSHAM,
WILTS.

Friday.

My Biley

This won't go till tomorrow morning but I hope you will get it on Sunday at Trevose House. I found out too late that there was only one post out today & that at an early hour in the morning so of course I missed it. We are in the midst of religious festivals here & the family has been going to church daily for the last week

Tonight Clive & I go to
dine with the Raven Hills
& I shall once more feel
myself in a civilized at-
mosphere which has been
peculiarly lacking lately
since I have had no
letter from you. I have
been making enquiries
about a studio for the
summer & there seem to
be good hopes of getting me
so that will be a considerable
help if I succeed.
How I wish we were going

to St Ives with you tomorrow
you will be snuffing all
the delicious smells there
& padding about the lanes
I hope a work of genius
will be the result.

Clive has had a most
choice letter from Saxon
in decadent Latin. He's
a wonderful little man.
Have you had another
visit from Lytton before
leaving London?

I feel so steeped in
common places. Here that
really it seems a shame
to let any of them escape
into paper. I see there

will be a problem as to
Julian's up bringing when
he's about 6 years old &
begins to use his intelligence
There will be one before that
about his clothes - for Lorna
I know will present him
with what she considers
charming & I shant be
able to let him wear
it. Poor little beast - he's
now howling with the wind.
but told me to give Aunt
Sula his best love - When
are you going to write stories
for him? Oh dear, with
what reverence I fill my
letters to hide the stupidity
which possesses me. It de-
presses to find how little ingen-
uity one has when one is in
these surroundings - Yours VB

(25)

19 April (1908)

Easter Sunday

CLEEVE HOUSE,
MELKSHAM,
WILTS.

Sunday.

My Billy.

I had your description of the Vaughans today & also your M.S. It is very picturesque & me & it down & write to you now instead of reading it as I am tempted to do. But as I must catch the early post to you tomorrow if you are to have a letter at all I must write this evening. We dined

you are sniffing the smells of Ves. a little
didn't use either of your familiars a little

(25)

19 April (1908)

Easter Sunday

CLEEVE HOUSE,
MELKSHAM,
WILTS.

Sunday.

My Billy.

I had your description of the Vaughans today & also your M.S. It is very interesting & one to sit down & write before now instead of reading it as I am tempted to do. But as I must catch the early post tomorrow if you are to have a letter at all I must write this evening. We dined

you are sniffing the smells of Mr Ives's dinner as it is cooking in the kitchen

on Friday with the Raven
Hills & I believe Clive
gave you some description
of the proceedings there.
Mrs. R. H. is really amusing
& also most wildly improper
in conversation. Talk of
freedom in talk - She
likes at nothing. Different
methods of stopping children
& the joys of married
life were freely discussed
& notes compared by her,
Mrs Arnimer & myself -
& I quite enjoyed myself.

NYPL

as you will believe. Also I see that I can get some useful tips from Mr Raven Hill as to the best methods of checking one's family & I mean to make use of the dance at Devizes for the purpose, though as she is very deaf I shall probably cause a scandal.

Today we have been lunching with the Armours who are very nice but not exciting. Still it is a mercy to escape the Sunday dinner here.

You seem to have had an interesting conversation with Lytton. Did you talk

of the great B.'s works?)
shall probably write to you
at length tomorrow & tell
you my opinion of my
Life -) see it will be
an absorbing work & prob-
ably your master-piece
so far. I think in future
you will have to keep me
supplied with works of yours
whenever I am here. For
contact with your wits lifts
me out of this dead level
of commonplaceness &)
swift the air like an old
war-horse & swirl with
delight. You have your
uses, Billy - Oh God - what
a world - as you used to say.
However Friday will come -
(in sum) I write such dull letters
but what is one to do in Wiltshire

NYPL

T. PARSONS 3.2.73